AGRICULTURE

The yield per hectare has been increased, thanks to the efforts of the State Agriculturists and those of the experimental stations. It is affirmed that for about ⅓ of the area sown to wheat selected seed has been utilised from certain new varieties of wheat from which as high a yield as 2650 kg. per hectare has been obtained at the experimental stations, but only 1675 to 1766 kg. when sown in the average farmsteads. This has contributed in raising the yield from about 1000 kg. per hectare during the pre-war period to 1157 kg. at the present time.

Though about ¾ of the cultivated land is devoted to cereals, 90% of the total output is absorbed locally, and only 10% is available for export in ordinary circumstances. Often, when the harvest is below the average there is little or nothing to export. The last international wheat Conference held in 1932 fixed Bulgaria's annual export quota of cereals at 2,500,000 quintals, or 236,000 tons, but in the export campaign of 1933/34, the quantity available for export did not reach this figure, and in the following season the cereals exported amounted to some 175,000 tons, so that it may be reckoned that Bulgaria has ceased counting as a grain exporting country. In fact the average Bulgarian farmstead does not produce sufficient grain for its own requirements, and it is only the larger ones, those of over 10 hectares, that have a surplus for disposal. This renders the majority of farmers unaffected by the fluctuation of prices since they consume their own produce, and strange as it seems, the fall in the prices of agricultural produce must on the whole be beneficial to them, since Prof. Y. Mollov, former Minister of Agriculture, affirms in the Annuaire of the Sofia University for 1933 (Agricultural Dept.) that the peasantry on the whole buy more than they sell. the proportion of their purchases to their sales being the following:

274 sumption of wine is about 23 litres per capita yearly, as against 153 in France and 101 in Italy. Owners of vineyards were complaining that they could not meet their expenses as grapes grown for wine were a drug on the market. It was stated in the Sobranye on Dec. 8. 1931 that while revenue from vineyards was 600 millions, expenditure on them was 720 million leva, while the capital they represented was 13,000 million.

245 [242] [439] Concurrently with the vine, orchard planting has received a great impetus, the State having established 39 nurseries and experimental stations from which young fruit trees are supplied to farmers at a nominal price. Apples and plums are being exported in increasing quantities, as well as walnuts, of which 2083 tons were exported in 1934. The area occupied by orchards was stated to be 19,420 hectares in 1932, of which 12,030 hectares were planted with plum trees, 919 with apple trees, 122 with pear trees and 6,349 were described as mixed orchards.

247 303 [439] Bulgaria is renowned for its attar of roses; unfortunately the world crisis has affected to a great extent this industry, and the area planted with rose bushes (6800 hectares in 1931) is consequently being reduced since the export of this product has declined from 3,157 kg. valued at 240 million leva in 1928, to 1218 kg. valued at 36 millions in 1934. Consequently a surplus stock of some 3000 kg. has accumulated and this has affected prices, which from 80,000 leva per kg. in 1932, have declined since to about a third of that figure One of the reasons of this falling off in the quantity exported, is the relative high cost of the attar of roses, due most likely to the unduly large amount of capital invested in the distilleries, the capacity of which is disproportionately great to the roses available for distillation, and which moreover work for only one month in the year. In fact, the 32 distilleries which were operating in 1931 were stated to have cost